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Monday, 10 October 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, His Excellency the Right Honourable Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Simmonds (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Once again I am proud and honoured to have the opportunity to address this assembly of nations and to convey to representatives fraternal and cordial greetings from the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis. The convening of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations provides the Governments of all Member States with an important opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the cause of peace, democracy and the pursuit of a higher quality of life for our peoples.

I wish to join other representatives by extending warmest congratulations from the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis to you, Mr. President, on your election to preside at this session of the General Assembly. I assure you of my Government's continued support and cooperation.

Allow me, Sir, to thank the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally, for the astute and most able manner in which he conducted and guided the affairs of this body during its forty-eighth session despite unprecedented trials and numerous challenges. His resolve and his successes give credence to his commitment to the planting of seeds of cooperation and goodwill in every corner of the globe to ensure that our children and grandchildren may feast on harvests of peace, equality, freedom and democracy.

The Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has faced many problems of great complexity during the past year. I wish to congratulate him on the outstanding manner in which he has been carrying out the mandate of the Organization.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis shares the commitment to democracy, respect for human dignity and

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the protection of human rights. Our people enjoy the effective workings of the democratic process and the safeguards provided by its institutions. We are determined to do all that we can, in our time, to ensure that future generations too will be able to exercise their democratic freedoms in an atmosphere of political stability.

There is an ever-increasing thirst for democracy throughout the world. In our hemisphere, military regimes have been giving way to democratically elected Governments.

Nowhere has this process been more dramatic than in Haiti, where, in 1991, the people, in free and fair elections under the keen scrutiny of the international community, chose Jean-Bertrand Aristide as their President. For almost four years the will of the people of Haiti and the resolve of the international community have been callously frustrated by the military, who usurped and have held on to power.

Saint Kitts and Nevis is in full agreement with the resolute action taken by the United States, with the support of the international community, to ensure compliance with Security Council resolution 940 (1994). The multinational force has been carrying out its work with dedication, professionalism and restraint. While there have been some untoward incidents, we must not be deterred. We must be prepared to stay the course for the benefit of the people of Haiti and for the growth of stable democracy in this hemisphere.

The process of establishing democracy will not end with the return of President Aristide; it will have just begun. In order to support the process, it is absolutely essential that the international community be ready to mobilize significant financial and technical resources to ensure the rebuilding of Haiti's economy and institutions - institutions destroyed by decades of neglect and mismanagement. Saint Kitts and Nevis stands ready to assist in the long and arduous task of helping the Haitian people rebuild their economy.

For many years the international community struggled to bring democracy to the majority of the people of South Africa. Today South Africa can be held up as a beacon of hope and a testament to the triumph of democracy. Last year my delegation welcomed the announcement of the holding of non-racial and multi-party elections - something for which my Government had been calling since joining this Organization 11 years ago. We have successfully and emphatically closed the final chapter of the brutal and unjust system of apartheid, and a new and democratic South Africa has emerged from its ashes.

However, despite the successes, the new South Africa is still on the threshold of unprecedented challenges. The journey is long and arduous, but the country's leaders and its people have a wonderful opportunity to right historical wrongs while at the same time charting a new and purposeful course in their future. The amalgamated voice of the people of South Africa has been heard, not only within that country but the world over. They have put their faith in the democratic process. As South Africa sails the fresh and often tumultuous waters of representative democracy and attempts to institutionalize social justice, St. Kitts and Nevis reiterates its commitment to join with the international community to give that country and its people the requisite support to develop lasting democratic and social institutions to ensure that democracy does work and is seen to work for every single citizen.

The contrasting realities of our world are quite real and apparent. Whenever we believe that we have solved one major problem, another presents itself elsewhere. This notwithstanding, we can all be pleased at the current movement towards peace under way in the Middle East. Not long ago the prospect of peace in any form seemed practically impossible. However, today the peace process seems to be gaining a firm foothold in that region. The international community must be ready to give unreserved support to that process and afford it more durable mechanisms for success.

My Government welcomes the consolidation of peace and the efforts at cooperation between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. No one could have predicted that so much would have been possible, and in so short a time. The rapidly changing face of Middle East politics augurs well for the overall peace process, quality of life and stability of the entire region. In this spirit, my delegation applauds the joint Declaration officially ending the state of belligerency between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This historic event marks yet another bold and positive step on the road to ensuring a lasting peace in the Middle East. My Government calls upon the countries in the Middle East to give peace a practical chance.

As prospects for peace continue to flourish in the Middle East, the tranquillity of the Gulf region is once again being threatened by an Iraqi troop build-up near the

Kuwait border. It is time for the people of Kuwait to feel secure within their own borders. It is time for full compliance by Iraq with Security Council resolutions pertaining to the aggression against Kuwait. It is time for Kuwait nationals detained in Iraq to be returned to their homeland. It is time for Iraq to pursue peaceful policies with its neighbours. Once again the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis urges the Government of Iraq to respect the finalization of the demarcation of the boundary between Kuwait and Iraq, which was accomplished by the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission on 20 May 1993, and to respect and abide by Security Council resolution 833 (1993), which guarantees the inviolability of the boundary between the two States. It is the fervent hope of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis that international support for this resolution will act as a deterrent, both now and in the future, against conflict between Kuwait and Iraq and will at the same time help enhance stability and security in the region.

The constantly changing realities of the present world situation call for Member Governments to harden traditional attitudes while making genuine attempts to search for pragmatic solutions requiring different and unprecedented approaches and compromises. It was against this backdrop that at the last session of the General Assembly my Government called upon the warring factions in the Yugoslavian conflict to come to the negotiating table.

We note with great satisfaction that the leaders of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzergovina have managed to arrive at a peaceful settlement of disputes. However, my Government abhors the wanton murder, "ethnic cleansing" and systematic persecution of innocent people which still characterize the brutal conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These atrocities and the flagrant and consistent violation of human rights are an affront to everything we as human beings hold sacred. The international community must continue to express its just indignation at the atrocities in this arena of conflict. At the same time, we must pursue all initiatives to find a just and lasting solution, preferably at the negotiating table.

Last year my delegation commended this body for its tireless efforts to keep the international community from the brink of nuclear warfare and called upon all countries signatories to the Treaty on non-proliferation to continue to abide by it and to urge those who had not yet become parties to it to do so. We repeat this plea today. We also look forward to an indefinite ban on all nuclear testing.

I must reiterate, however, that we should not stop there, but should aim also for the non-proliferation of all weapons, including chemical, biological and conventional. In this regard, St. Kitts and Nevis also supports the moratorium on the export of land-mines, and goes even further by calling for a ban on their manufacture as well as their export. Land-mines continue to cause tremendous misery and untold hardship for many populations world-wide long after conflicts have ended. In most cases the victims of these land-mines are poor farmers and innocent children.

It is our sacred and solemn responsibility as world leaders to ensure a safe world for our nation's children. My delegation therefore congratulates the United Nations on its consistent efforts to fulfil its humanitarian missions in the many different theatres of tragic suffering world-wide. The humanitarian catastrophe which has been unfolding in Rwanda threatens to destabilize the fragile economic and political balance of its neighbours. The scope and scale of this human disaster, unprecedented in the history of modern-day Africa, should catapult us to seek a peaceful end to the crisis. Reports on the revolting policy of "ethnic cleansing" and indiscriminate massacres of women and children strike a familiar, mind-wrenching note in our collective psyche.

Although its resources are minuscule, St. Kitts and Nevis could not fail to make a financial contribution to the United Nations relief effort in Rwanda. We must act decisively to mobilize more resources from every possible source to intensify the relief effort in that tragic country.

We, the Members of the United Nations cannot pamper our consciences with pious speeches on what the United Nations ought to do to alleviate the suffering, while at the same time rendering the Organization impotent by refusing to give it the necessary financial and material capabilities it so desperately needs to carry out its functions more effectively.

The United Nations is being called upon with greater frequency to respond to a greater variety of conflicts, suffering and development needs. If the Organization is to be able to respond effectively, we must evaluate from time to time not only our resources, but the way in which we manage those resources, and ensure that there is greater accountability in such management. In short, the United Nations, recognizing the responsibilities entrusted to it by the international community, must be more accountable to its Members.

What we are suggesting, therefore, is a more balanced relationship predicated on the principles of responsibility and accountability. The delegation of Saint Kitts and Nevis welcomes the creation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services; its creation is not an end in itself, but a means to ensure that there is greater accountability within the Organization.

We must remain cognizant of the fact that the fundamental sovereignty of all States, large or small, is respected equally by the United Nations. If necessary, the United Nations will protect the rights of the small against the power of the large. It has institutionalized the rights of small and micro States to exist and to coexist with the big and powerful nations. All independent States, therefore, irrespective of their size and population, are equal under international law. Every effort should be made, therefore, to enable small States to participate more fully in the day-to-day decision-making process of the United Nations. One way to achieve this is through more equitable geographical representation within the Secretariat, and I appeal for this to be implemented.

Another way in which the United Nations can be made more globally inclusive is by bringing more Members into the fold. Last year, my Government called upon the United Nations to begin the process that would lead to the ultimate re-admission of the Republic of China in Taiwan into the United Nations.

My Government stands firmly behind that appeal and we repeat this appeal here today. The Republic of China in Taiwan continues to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations and to govern itself by the principles of international and humanitarian law. It has proven repeatedly that it is a country committed to peace, democracy and development, not only for its 21 million people, who are entitled to proper representation internationally, but for all peoples, that their quality of life may be improved. The Republic of China in Taiwan is a major international player in commerce, trade and development assistance, and would make a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations.

I would now like to turn our attention to the question of sustainable development and small States, and to commend quite highly the efforts of the United Nations in bringing the reality and concerns of small island developing States to the forefront of international focus.

The Declaration of Barbados is a step in the right direction. It recognizes that small island developing States have special and peculiar needs. We, in small island developing States have been saying this for a long time. Our very survival as a people and as independent States is dependent on the sustainable development of our human resources and the maximization of our scarce material resources. These limited material resources are under constant and severe stress despite our efforts.

Although we recognize the Conference in Barbados as a giant step for small island developing States, the discussion must be taken much further, beyond conference halls and into communities, and translated into practical tangible benefits. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, for instance, over the past ten years we have been engaged in projects and programmes whereby we seek to create a sound and pragmatic balance between economic and social development, on the one hand, and environmental protection on the other.

However, existing problems and innovative attempts by small island developing States to improve their standard of living very rarely receive consistent support from the developed world. Micro States like Saint Kitts and Nevis are being called upon to prove their viability within the international community. The irony lies in the fact that when we manage to raise our standard of living to a decent level, the international community withdraws or reduces its support under the pretext that our GNP per capita is too high.

I do not believe that we should have to reiterate the vulnerability index of small States like mine. Although Saint Kitts and Nevis does not produce or use any significant amount of material to damage the ozone layer or contribute to coastal erosion and rising sea levels, we are among those which suffer most as a result of their impact. Small island States like mine suffer greatly from environmental and natural disasters, yet we lack the capacity to respond to and recover from them. The objective reality of our individual and collective experience speaks volumes. We have seen how less than a month ago, tropical storm Debbie — insignificant, really, as a tropical storm, not strong enough to be a hurricane — devastated the banana industry in Saint Lucia, thus wreaking havoc on that country's economy.

We need special attention. We need special regimes. As I have done in the past, I appeal for greater equity within the international economic system. The time has come for the developed world to rethink the outdated policy of trying to make a single prescription fit all countries. We need to develop a more durable, and

country-specific approach, based on fairness, economic circumstance and need. Above all, the concept of the vulnerability index must become part of the economic language and armamentarium of all multilateral and national development institutions.

Indeed, the developing world should not view our small island Caribbean States as dumping grounds for over-produced consumer items, but see us as developing economies whose fragile banana and sugar exports need to be protected.

The Declaration of Barbados underscores the fact that small island States have sovereign rights over their natural resources. The developed world, therefore, cannot claim paternity over our biodiversity under the pretext that their technology was used.

Further, on the issue of the environment, I would like to call upon the developed countries to de-link economic assistance, trade and investment from environmental protection. In most cases, small island developing States are penalized for allegedly exploiting limited resources and for so-called environmental degradation.

I urge the international community to assist developing countries to obtain the wherewithal to gauge the exploitation of resources and to do environmental impact assessments so as to ensure that the precarious balance is maintained.

Social, economic and political advancement in small developing countries should not be held to ransom by the industrialized world as a way of punishing them for environmental degradation. The protection and preservation of the environment is a global responsibility and must engender a collective approach. The industrialized world must take responsibility for much of the damage to the environment and work towards a framework for international cooperation and partnership in preserving it.

Developing countries ought to be given assistance and be presented with alternatives to destroying the forest or depleting the limited resources at their disposal. While the international community moves ever closer to the realization of economic blocs, special attention must also be devoted to the fragile commodities export sector in some of these countries, and the need for special regimes to be put in place to ensure the viability of most of these small economies, which do not have the advantage of economies of scale and large consumer markets.

I should like to repeat my fervent appeal to Governments of developed countries and to multilateral agencies to become more supportive of and responsive to the needs of small developing countries by providing the technical assistance, information-sharing, technology transfer and investments, and to promote human resource development through education and training.

I call on the international community to honour its commitment made in Barbados in May 1994:

> "The international community should cooperate with small island developing States in the implementation of the Programme of Action ... by providing effective means, including adequate, predictable new and additional financial resources in accordance with chapter 33 of Agenda 21; facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technology, including on concessional and preferential terms as mutually agreed". *(A/CONF.167/9, Annex I, Part Two, III.1)*

This will ensure success in achieving our goal of sustainable development.

There is nothing more noble than the gift of life. At the important and historic World Summit for Children of 1990, participating Governments agreed to make the world a much safer place for future generations of children. At the United Nations Conference on small States, we decided to commit our efforts to the efficient use of land resources, to work towards creating better education and improved health care, and to exploit natural resources on a sustainable basis.

If we achieve this, we shall indeed be bequeathing to our children and their children a much safer world. It is against the backdrop of safeguarding our children's future that the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis participated in the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. We fully support the view that the issue of population control must be addressed.

Although we share the view that a population explosion may eventually threaten the Earth's capacity to provide in a sustainable manner, we do not believe that simply trying to control population growth will by itself solve the serious problems that we are facing today. My Government is of the view that a concerted attempt to redeploy much of the world's resources, to discover new resources and to use them more equitably would better serve the interest of development for all peoples.

I cannot but remind us all that the international menace of drugs and drug trafficking still looms large. The danger and the trade are ever-increasing. We should continue to wage a determined and aggressive war on drug trafficking and narco-terrorism, which seek to undermine and unravel the social and political fabric of our societies.

The challenges facing the United Nations are monumental, but not more so than those facing individual nations, large or small, or individuals in poor communities, as well as in affluent societies. We occupy a global common. Therefore, we must together find practical solutions to the problems of hunger, poverty, war, crime, development and freedom in every corner of our world. If we fail, none will be secure, none will be at peace, none will be free.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of St. Kitts and Nevis for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of St. Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business of Barbados, Her Excellency the Honourable Billie Miller, on whom I now call.

Ms. Miller (Barbados): Mr President, it is a pleasure for me to congratulate you, Foreign Minister Essy, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. The Barbados delegation has cooperated closely with Your Excellency in the past, and we have every confidence that you will guide the work of this session with distinction.

It is with a deep sense of pride and satisfaction that I also offer my Government's congratulations to our outgoing President, Ambassador Rudy Insanally of Guyana. As the first representative from the Caribbean to hold that high office, Ambassador Insanally has represented the entire region with exemplary skill and diplomacy, and has left much seminal work for us to build upon over the coming months.

I also extend the good wishes of the Barbados Government to our distinguished Secretary-General, Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whom the Barbadian people had the honour of receiving in Bridgetown earlier this year. We offer him our continued support in his difficult task at the helm of the Organization at so crucial an epoch in world affairs.

On 23 June this year, the Republic of South Africa received a warm and emotional welcome back to this Hall as it formally resumed its participation in the work of the Assembly.

As it did then, Barbados warmly welcomes the return of South Africa to the community of nations. As we rejoice at the demise of apartheid, we are still greatly moved by the tremendous sacrifices made by the men, women and children of South Africa that made a democratic South Africa possible, and by the steadfastness and the statesmanship of the South African leaders, particularly President Mandela, whose great stature and wisdom captivated this body some seven days ago. We also acknowledge the sterling contribution of the Special Committee against Apartheid, which for 32 years worked unremittingly to achieve this remarkable outcome.

South Africa is well poised to play a significant role in this Organization, and the international community has much to learn from the South African experience.

It is, however, imperative that we recognize that South Africa still very much needs our assistance with the great challenges that lie ahead. The Government of Barbados pledges to support the Government of South Africa as it strives to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

Barbados is greatly encouraged by the progress made in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East since the signing of the Washington Declaration by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in September last year. The Cairo Accord, which paved the way for the commencement of Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho, and the Israeli-Jordanian Declaration, signed in Washington in July this year, are welcome steps on the difficult path towards the attainment of peace in that region.

Barbados hopes that future resolutions on the Middle East will be reflective of these advances and will serve as a fillip to the parties engaged in the negotiation process as they strive to achieve a comprehensive peace in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

The people of Barbados went to the polls on 6 September and, in an incident-free election, voted a new Government into office. I am honoured to be a part of that new order. The democracy that Barbados practices is ingrained in the culture and habits of its people. For them, freedom of speech and association and freedom to vote at regular intervals for a Government of their choice and to have the Government installed in an immediate and orderly transfer of power are the simple and natural norms of life. Yet, sadly, what we in Barbados take for granted, others close by in our own hemisphere still struggle to achieve.

My country, Barbados, has gained international recognition for its comprehensive network of social services, its people-oriented development policies and its high quality of life, which have earned it first place in the developing world in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. The present Government of the Barbados Labour Party fully recognizes the challenges that lie ahead for a small, middle-income country like Barbados to sustain that achievement in an international economic environment that continues to marginalize the small and fragile in the developing world. With few resource endowments, our survival must depend exclusively on the skills of our industrial and committed people and on the God-given beauty of our natural environment.

The new Government has responded immediately to that challenge in its manifesto "Charter for Change", a fundamental policy document that represents a solemn compact by this Government to work together with its citizens in seeking for Barbados a strong, strategic position in the global community of nations as we approach the twenty-first century. We are determined to use the opportunities created by the technological and communications revolution to overcome the obstacle of size and to harness our natural and strategic assets to convert Barbados into a full-service economy. We will encourage the development of tourism and the international financial services and informatics sectors to their fullest potential. We will create a business-friendly environment that will be conducive to new investment, both local and foreign. We will facilitate the growth and development of the small-business sector and encourage entrepreneurship. A radically restructured Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business, under my direction, has been put in place to spearhead this endeavour.

Against this background, the people of Barbados view with concern the tragic situation of Haiti. For far too long Haiti has been a burden on the collective conscience of the region. For too long a just and equitable solution has not only eluded the countries in our own hemisphere, but eluded also the grasp of the Security Council of the United Nations. We are greatly encouraged that the deployment into Haiti of the multinational force took place under peaceful circumstances and that the spectre of a bloody confrontation was averted. The participation of Barbados in the multinational force and the United Nations Mission in Haiti, authorized by Security Council resolution 940 (1994), is testimony to our commitment to ensuring that the will of the Haitian people is finally respected and their lawful President and his administration restored to office without delay. The clear terms of resolution 940 (1994) must be honoured in full, and the power of a brutal and lawless military and its callous leadership effectively and permanently neutralized.

As stated by Prime Minister Owen Arthur of Barbados in his recent address at the White House on behalf of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM):

> "Where democracy has taken root, it should be encouraged to grow and to flourish. Like the Soviet Union and South Africa, Haiti too deserves its rendezvous with democracy. The Haitian people wished for it. They suffered for it. They voted for it. And now they are dying for it."

Haiti's rendezvous with democracy has now begun in earnest. Hope is finally returning to a people that for a very long time had felt that all was lost. But as we in CARICOM have warned on numerous previous occasions, the ballot box is merely the beginning of the democratic process. The international community must now orchestrate a massive effort to put in place the institutional infrastructure necessary to maintain and strengthen the fledgling Haitian democracy and to bury forever the ghosts of the past. The reconstruction of Haiti entails the creation of conditions that will ensure that the rights and freedoms of all Haitian people are respected. It must also respond effectively to the critical development needs of the Haitian population and to their just aspirations to share equitably in the resources of their country.

The Governments of the Caribbean Community are committed to playing their part in this vital phase of the process, and to this end have agreed to provide assistance, in concert with other members of the international community, in the development of a civilian

force as a professional organization for maintaining the peace and respect for human rights in Haiti. They are also prepared to make available to the constitutionally appointed authorities in Haiti a cadre of officers from the public service of the member States of CARICOM to provide training in public administration, the conduct of elections and other activities in support of the institutionalization of the democratic process.

As we look across the Caribbean Community, we see much that gives us cause for hope. The private and public sectors of our subregion are collaborating more and more, while, at the same time, intergovernmental cooperation has increased. The political dialogue between Heads of Government is flourishing, and economic cooperation is expanding. Concerted efforts are also being made to boost intraregional trade and to improve the economic, social and cultural well-being of our peoples.

This year the Caribbean Community celebrated its twenty-first anniversary. A pioneer among integration movements in our hemisphere, CARICOM has sought to respond to the reality that Caribbean peoples share a common destiny, which is best realized through coordination and cooperation in pursuit of their economic, social and political well-being.

This year also, building on the foundations laid by many statesmen of the Caribbean and on the ideas most recently developed by the West Indian Commission, the leaders of 25 States whose shores are washed by the Caribbean Sea met at Cartagena, Colombia, to sign the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States. The Association will bring together in their common pursuit of development 40 Caribbean-basin States, countries and territories with a total population of 200 million. Its stated aims are: to promote, utilize and develop the collective capabilities of the Caribbean region to achieve sustainable cultural economic, social, scientific and technological advancement; to develop the potential of the Caribbean Sea through interaction among member States and with third parties; to promote an enhanced economic space for trade and investment with opportunities for cooperation and concerted action, in order to increase the benefits which accrue to the peoples of the Caribbean from their resources and assets, including the Caribbean Sea; and to establish, consolidate and augment, as appropriate, institutional structures and cooperation agreements responsive to the various cultural identities, developmental needs and innovative systems within the region.

Barbados fully supports the aims of the Association and welcomes its establishment as an important step in the consolidation of the regional integration effort. But our aims to foster development across the Caribbean will not be complete until all of the partners are free to participate on an equal footing. In this regard we believe the time has come to remove the last vestige of cold-war rivalry from our hemisphere. We join the international community in appealing to the United States to lift its punitive economic embargo on Cuba and to facilitate the economic reintegration of that neighbouring State into the world economy. We urge that political will be found to resolve the remaining differences between the two countries through further dialogue.

Earlier this year, 116 countries and 150 non-governmental organizations were represented at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados. The first follow-up activity to be held in fulfillment of a mandate from the International Conference on Environment and Development, the "Earth summit", the Conference aimed to develop a blueprint of priority actions for the implementation of Agenda 21 in the specific context of small island developing States. The results of the Conference will shortly come before the General Assembly for its endorsement at this session. We urge the international community to lend its full support to the measures proposed to ensure sustained follow-up and implementation of the proposals contained in the Barbados Programme of Action.

On 16 November, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea will come into force, 12 years after it was opened for signature at Montego Bay. We welcome the recent developments which have enhanced the prospects of universal participation in the Convention and look forward to the inauguration of the work of its relevant organs. We look forward too to the successful conclusion next year of the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and to the adoption of a legally binding regime to regulate the conservation and management of these threatened stocks.

The wise observation by the Secretary-General that "development is a fundamental right and the strongest foundation for peace" has been recognized by the General Assembly, which in recent years has been giving priority attention to social development by convening a number of international conferences devoted primarily to social and economic issues, as envisaged in Article 55 of the Charter.

The recent International Conference on Population and Development spoke volumes about the changing nature of international dialogue and the changing role of women. In greater numbers and with greater strength, civil society in the form of non-governmental organizations worked alongside Governments to craft a plan of action which might realistically address the reproductive health of women and the broader needs of women in the development process. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ms. Nafis Sadik, Mr. Fred Sai and the rest of the Conference leadership, who pushed for and achieved a broad consensus on many difficult issues which fall into the realm of the population and development dialogue.

For my country, the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Plan of Action confirm much of the effort which has been spent on improving women's access to family planning and health services. I stand before the Assembly as an example of the progressive attitude which Barbadians hold regarding women's status and leadership potential. I am also reminded that we too need to work on areas highlighted by the population Conference proceedings: difficult issues such as reducing maternal mortality, addressing the needs of special groups such as youth, and looking at how our policies and programmes further women's empowerment.

Still, I am heartened by the openness of the United Nations processes to the contributions of citizens' groups alongside Governments, and will watch with great interest the progress at the social summit and women's conference. These conferences, together with the 1990 World Summit for Children and the 1992 Rio de Janiero Conference, extend along a continuum which urges action to look into the difficulties faced by our citizens and at how Government policies can relieve the uneven pressures which are put upon women.

Barbados considers that these meetings are of vital importance and that their core themes demand the adoption of a meaningful programme of action that would demonstrate a firm commitment to the oft-repeated concept that the human being should indeed be placed at the centre of development. Poverty, unemployment, gender equality, children's rights and other integrated issues must be tackled with the same urgency and resolve as other aspirations of the Charter if this Organization intends to signal a true turning-point in its human-development strategy.

The United Nations has contributed significantly to promoting and ensuring respect for and observance of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights on 10 December 1948. The legal framework and the established human rights machinery have been greatly strengthened by the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna in June 1993. The Conference affirmed that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and especially emphasized that the right to development is a basic human right.

At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly honoured the Latin American and Caribbean region by appointing His Excellency Mr. José Ayala Lasso of Ecuador as the first United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a first step in implementing the Vienna Declaration. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly must now seek with equal vigour to implement the other important measures of the Vienna Declaration. Barbados urges that the Working Group on Human Rights pursue its mandate in a coherent, transparent and balanced manner in order that the long-term interests of human rights may be truly served.

Barbados believes that every human being is entitled to the unfettered enjoyment of all human rights and that the ultimate human right is the right to life. In this context, we urge that the Assembly give serious consideration at this session to the harmful impact that illicit drug trafficking, organized transnational crime and terrorism have on the effective enjoyment of human rights. Barbados welcomes the recent decision of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to establish a working group to pursue areas of collaboration with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in maritime trafficking. We are also encouraged by the progress the Working Group has made on the draft statute for an international criminal court and support the recommendation by the International Law Commission that the General Assembly convene an international conference of plenipotentiaries to study the draft statute and to conclude a convention on the establishment of an international criminal court.

My Government has always been a strong supporter of the United Nations. We believe that in the emerging new world order it is more critical than ever for the United Nations to be capable of fulfilling its role as the primary guarantor of the security and independence of small States, and as the protector of the powerless and economically vulnerable who form the vast majority of its membership. It is also important for the small, but

morally authoritative, voices of this world body to continue to stress the absolute necessity for the international community to use equitably and responsibly the powers conferred upon it in the Charter.

Over the past year, priority attention has been given in the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to the task of elaborating an Agenda for Development as a necessary corollary to, and indeed a prerequisite for, the "Agenda for Peace". We have taken careful note of the Secretary-General's report to the forty-eighth session in this regard and look forward to giving detailed consideration to the recommendations which he will present in his report to this session.

While we recognize that the United Nations has an inescapable responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, we must acknowledge also that peace and development are indivisible. The root causes of most conflicts are to be found in the legacy of poverty and dispossession that underdevelopment engenders. While we agree that the world body must of necessity respond to critical conflict situations as they arise, it must at the same time be pointed out that the vast majority of the world's population does not live in a state of war or civil conflict. The betterment of the economic and social conditions of that majority deserves a central place in the deliberative and decision-making bodies of the United Nations and must be the principal objective of an Agenda for Development.

An Agenda for Development must promote a new consensus on international cooperation for development and an integrated approach which is people-centred. Furthermore, it must be based on creating a new cooperative relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, one which recognizes the fundamental importance of the social dimension to development. The policies pursued by these institutions over the past decade, particularly within the framework of structural-adjustment programmes, have left a legacy which convinces us of the need for radical reform.

We must remind ourselves that the improvement of human well-being is the fundamental criterion to which the development objective must respond. There is little value in short-term economic growth if the measures used to attain it result inevitably in social disintegration. The Barbados delegation therefore strongly supports the view of the South Centre that fresh approaches must be sought and a new social contract established if social, political and economic objectives are to be reconciled. The United Nations is the appropriate forum to ensure that this reconciliation of objectives can be promoted in a universal, transparent and democratic manner.

Several useful views have emerged over the past year during the discussion of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. We look forward to an intensification of these discussions during the forty-ninth session. Any enlargement of the Council must only be contemplated within a context that deals also with the issue of equitable geographical representation, the question of the veto, and the question of increasing the transparency of the operations of the Council and its accountability to the wider international community. Decisions arrived at hastily to deal with only one aspect of the issue, or merely to respond to an arbitrary deadline of next year's celebrations, will not provide a lasting solution to this critical issue.

The United Nations will have reached a remarkable milestone in 1995 as it celebrates 50 years of tireless service to the goal of enabling all mankind to live in dignity and enjoy better standards of life in larger freedom. While it is fitting that we acknowledge this milestone with appropriate ceremony, we must recognize that the United Nations will be called upon to face challenges in the twenty-first century that could be immeasurably more difficult than those of the previous era. Global stability will depend more and more on the ability of the United Nations to promote economic and social justice than on its ability to silence guns.

The kind of challenges I have in mind are poignantly etched in the following quotation from an unpublished work in progress entitled "The Rwanda Poem" by the distinguished Barbadian poet and writer Mr. Kamau Brathwaite, who, only a few days ago, received the Neustadt International Prize for Literature:

"Sa/hell crumbles into these flickering miles
Miles of the silences of holes
Of the cold dry moon in our belly
Marrow burning its protein into its sound
Skin smouldering to ash
Holocaust of dome - there is no music anywhere
Heads propped up on sticks of skeletons
Bald headed children naked of all else
But large deep agate space-age eyes"

Global stability will be difficult to maintain if the cries of the majority of the world's peoples, whose lives

are marked by a lack of food, shelter and education and who are afflicted by poverty, disease, and other forms of social misery, continue to go unheeded and are merely reflected as glaring statistics in United Nations reports on the world's social situation.

It is Barbados' belief that the challenge that will confront the United Nations in the era ahead will lie undoubtedly in the humanitarian sphere. This Organization is the only universal body with the legitimacy to take up this challenge. But if it is to meet this challenge successfully, it must be made more efficient, effective and alert. In this context, prevention must supersede reaction.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization next year, "We the peoples" must renew our commitment to this unique body and strive to ensure its relevance to the twenty-first century. Mr. President, be assured of Barbados' commitment to these endeavours.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Dame Mary Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I have pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Her Excellency The Honourable Mary Eugenia Charles. I invite her to address the General Assembly.

Dame Mary Eugenia Charles (Dominica): Mr. President, permit me to extend my delegation's congratulations to you and your country, Côte d'Ivoire, on the occasion of your election to the high office of the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that with your proven diplomatic skills and considerable experience the affairs of the General Assembly will be conducted in a manner that will redound to the credit of this institution. At the same time I must express my delegation's heartfelt appreciation and thanks to your immediate predecessor in office, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, for the competence which he demonstrated in the discharge of his duties. His commendable performance is a source of pride to me as it is to all citizens of the Caribbean region.

(spoke in French)

I am very happy that we are here with you today, Sir.

(spoke in English)

While the maintenance of peace and security remains the main objective of the United Nations, the global environment, the widening gap between rich and poor nations, the failure of the ill-defined new world order to materialize, and the forces released by the ending of the cold war present the Organization with new problems and challenges. As regional conflicts erupt, the consequential increase in the number of displaced persons and refugees exerts greater pressure on the United Nations peace-keeping apparatus at a time when its available resources are already severely taxed. It is imperative, therefore, that the United Nations continue with its restructuring programme and with those initiatives calculated to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance the capability of the Organization to achieve desirable results. However, cost-effectiveness, commendable as that may be, should not be at the expense of those worthwhile programmes designed to benefit small developing nations. We firmly believe that the United Nations has the capacity to maintain those programmes while it strives simultaneously to exercise the necessary budgetary restraints.

The ethnic and tribal conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the reported acts of genocide and other atrocities are troubling and must exercise the minds and hearts of human beings everywhere. The international community cannot appear to condone such reprehensible acts, and appropriate measures must be taken to punish those responsible. Accordingly, Dominica unhesitatingly supports the establishment of international tribunals for the trial and punishment of those persons found guilty of crimes against humanity.

The Commonwealth of Dominica supports the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and as we look forward optimistically to a nuclear-free world we call upon all nations possessing weapons of mass destruction to join in a cooperative effort to reduce and finally to eliminate those weapons from the face of the Earth. We must also express concern at the apparent unwillingness of the international community to stem the increase in the rate of production of conventional arms of increasing sophistication and potential for destruction.

Acquired in many instances by third world nations, ostensibly to maintain secure borders and deter aggression, these weapons very often become effective instruments of internal repression and the cause of national and regional instability. Time after time the United Nations is called upon to expend its limited resources in repairing the damage and in alleviating the consequential suffering and misery. We are consistent in maintaining that a reordering of priorities is called for and that a slight shifting of resources away from the acquisition of unnecessary arsenals and into development programmes would result in tremendous social and economic benefits to the citizens of many developing countries.

In many countries human rights abuses occur on a daily basis. Dominica's respect for human rights and its commitment to ensure that the rights of every citizen are protected cannot be questioned. It is in keeping with that commitment that the Commonwealth of Dominica applauds the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and will support efforts to make that Office and the Centre for Human Rights effective instruments in the promotion and protection of human rights. We believe, however, that in the discharge of his responsibilities the task of the High Commissioner would be significantly strengthened if the United Nations General Assembly were to abandon its present selective condemnation of human rights abuses. Human rights abuses should be condemned wherever and whenever they occur and no nation should be permitted to take comfort from the fact that its violation of human rights covenants will escape the glare of publicity and the strictures of the international community.

The readmission of a democratic, non-racial South Africa to the United Nations on 23 June 1994 is a source of tremendous pleasure for my delegation and a tribute to the many persons and organizations, both inside and outside the United Nations, who worked so tirelessly in the long and hard struggle to put an end to the pernicious system of apartheid. The majority of the people of South Africa must be congratulated on their sustained effort and determination, as well as on their conciliatory attitude which augurs well for the new South Africa. Above all we must congratulate and applaud the President, Mr. Nelson Mandela, and his Second Deputy President, Mr. de Klerk, on the courage, considerable skill and political enlightenment which they jointly and effectively harnessed in reaching an accomplishment that may eventually be regarded as a model for the world. The journey has only just begun. Many difficulties lie ahead but there are reasons to be optimistic. With the assistance and support of the international community South Africa will succeed.

The progress that has been made in the bilateral negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours in the Middle East is heart-warming indeed. With the first steps having been taken on the road to Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, and with the signing of the accord between Jordan and Israel, there appears to be an excellent opportunity for an eventual resolution of the conflict that has plagued that region for too long. Optimism must be tempered with caution, however. The implementation of the accords and full realization of Palestinian autonomy will depend for their success on generous financial support, both private and public. And while the United Nations must not be intrusive, its interest in seeing that the legitimate hopes, aspirations and security needs of the people of the area are realized imposes upon it a duty to continue to be seized with the subject-matter and to continue to monitor the process and the progress towards a full and just peace in the Middle East.

In different forums and at various times since September 1991, the Commonwealth of Dominica has consistently called for the ousting of the military regime in Port au Prince, the return of President Aristide to Haiti and the restoration of democracy and the rule of law to that country. For three years the military leaders in Haiti have authorized, encouraged and condoned brutal acts of revenge and wanton violence against the citizens of Haiti and have continued to exercise governmental power in defiance of world opinion. They temporized by entering into the Governors Island Agreement, which they later failed to honour. Their intransigence and unreliability led the Security Council to conclude that the unique character of the situation in Haiti required an exceptional response and that there was need for the use of all necessary means to facilitate the departure from Haiti of the military leaders and the prompt return of the legitimately elected President.

Faced with the prospect of having to confront an overwhelming multinational force, the military leaders have finally decided to step down, and while recent events give reason for pause, the prospect of the restoration of democracy to Haiti seems decidedly brighter than at any time in the last 36 months. When the Haitian people were the victims of officially sanctioned brutality and violence, we felt their pain. When President Aristide returns, we will rejoice with them. We wish the Haitian people well, and we will do

whatever we can to assist in their efforts to attain that measure of freedom that can come only from a government established on democratic principles. President Aristide is devoted to Haiti and the well-being of Haitians. We must support him and encourage him in this daunting and lonely task that he has undertaken for his people.

However, as friends of the Haitian people, we plead with them to understand that democracy cannot be imposed from outside; it can only develop from a genuine desire of the people of Haiti of all persuasions. A political environment of intense hatred and passionate desire for revenge is not fertile ground for a young and fragile democracy. Success in their new endeavour will require that nobility of spirit that seeks the path of reconciliation and trust and eschews vengeance and recriminations. No one can pretend that the task will be easy, but the following excerpt from a speech delivered by Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the commemoration of the Day of the African Child on 16 June 1994 might be instructive to the Haitian people. Speaking of his beloved South Africa, the venerable archbishop said:

> "The Minister of Justice of South Africa was detained several times. He suffers from a heart condition. The security forces tried to kill him by swapping his tablets. Today he is writing, drafting the legislation for an amnesty to forgive the security forces that wanted to kill him. If it can happen in a South Africa where it is said the problem is so intractable, no country in the world can ever again have an excuse for not being able to resolve its problem. God is saying, I set before you South Africa as a paradigm. This is how it can be done. There is hope for the world when South Africa can become as it has become."

We are in accord with Archbishop Tutu, and we are firmly of the view that if it can be done in South Africa it can and must be done in Haiti.

The exclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan from membership in this body and from participation in the activities of its various agencies continues to be of concern to us. It appears incongruous to us that an industrial country of 21 million people with a democratic Government, with full membership in the Asian Development Bank, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, the Pacific Basin Economic Council and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, and with the capacity to make meaningful and worthwhile contributions to the activities of the United Nations is denied membership when everyone agrees that it exercises sovereign authority over a defined geographical area. On the principle of universality alone, the request of the Republic of China on Taiwan for membership in the United Nations is justifiable. We do not believe that the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan precludes eventual unification. On the contrary, in our view it is likely to help the process along, and no one can pretend that parallel representation stands in the way. The citizens of the Republic of China on Taiwan deserve to be accorded those rights and privileges enjoyed by citizens of all sovereign States, and the commonwealth of Dominica advocates and supports the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to full membership in the United Nations.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are gratified that the participants at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo have wisely arrived at a consensus that gives support to the view that, in the words of one commentator, "sustainable development cannot be realized without the full engagement and complete empowerment of women". That proposition has long been acknowledged and incorporated into our decision-making processes, to the extent that today women have equal access to education at all levels and gender equality manifests itself in all facets of life in Dominica. We realize that the plan of action requires increased spending on social programmes for its viability, and it is hoped that at the Conference in Copenhagen in 1995, participants from donor and recipient countries will arrive at a reasonable formula in that regard.

We support the establishment of the World Trade Organization and the liberalization of trade practices, but we need to remind the international community that fragile economies of small island states can be easily destroyed if free trade does not embody that measure of fairness necessary for their survival. We require that the larger and economically successful States be mindful of the need for poor small States to survive. The recent formation of the Association of Caribbean States will, we hope, provide a framework for increased trade among the States in the area and enhance the capability of the region in its search for ways to reach beneficial accommodation with more powerful trading groups in the hemisphere. We look forward to the forthcoming Summit of the Americas and the proposed frank and detailed examination of such issues as the hemispheric integration

process - including a hemispheric free trade zone - the role of multilateral financial institutions, sustainable development, and resource flows and debt in hemispheric development. We hope that out of that gathering will come not only a keener appreciation of the vulnerabilities of the smaller States in the region but also a greater impetus for collaboration on matters of regional trade and development.

After 49 years, its imperfections notwithstanding, the United Nations remains the world's greatest deliberative body and mankind's greatest hope for survival in a reasonably well-ordered and peaceful global community. As the United Nations prepares to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, we need to place on record our recognition of its many worthwhile accomplishments, and we hope that it will continue in its search for new and innovative ways to meet the challenges of the future.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the statement she has just made.

Dame Mary Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency, Mr. Fathula Jameel, on whom I now call.

Mr. Jameel (Maldives): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Amara Essy on his election to guide the work of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. His election to that important post is testimony to his personal credentials and to the important role played by Côte d'Ivoire in international affairs. I am confident that his wise guidance and leadership will enable this session of the General Assembly to deal successfully with the very important issues on its agenda.

I should also like to commend the work of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana, who demonstrated outstanding diplomatic skills and dedication in so ably steering the work of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion.

Allow me also to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, for his untiring efforts in promoting international peace and security and justice.

The winds of change that are currently sweeping across the world give us, more then ever before, new hope in the promise of a better future, a future in which scarce resources will be utilized to feed the millions of hungry mouths and to provide basic health care, safe drinking water and a basic level of education to the needy rather than be again spent to build military might and to threaten the world with a new era of confrontation - a future which will provide a safe and clean environment in which human beings can live safely, in dignity, respect and hope.

The recently held World Conference on Human Rights, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the International Conference on Population and Development and the forthcoming World Conference on Women and World Summit for Social Development are clear testimony to that hope.

This was the dream of our founding fathers, and it is also ours. With the end of the cold war and on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, let us not hesitate to rededicate ourselves once again, with more vigour and more commitment, to the fulfilment of this dream.

The United Nations must be able to evolve and promote a stronger and more comprehensive system for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Let us not allow potentially dangerous situations to escalate into situations that leave the international community with no alternative but to take painful and expensive measures to enforce peace. Most important, the Organization must play a revitalized role as the principal broker and promoter of peace and justice in the world.

My delegation welcomes the present process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations. We are hopeful that the process of reform will take into consideration the concerns of all States to protect their security and maintain their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The establishment of effective measures of internal oversight of the United Nations system is one of the useful steps taken by the General Assembly. Special

attention must be given to all the issues involved in the choice and recruitment of personnel if we truly intend to improve the efficiency of the Organization, and we must emphasize quality rather than quantity so that the United Nations system may remain non-biased, less-politicized and vibrant.

For Maldives, the United Nations has always been and will always be the best hope for warding off challenges to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States. The Charter of the United Nations, which we remain firmly bound to honour, recognizes the inalienable right of every nation to exist within secure boundaries and of the people of every country to live in dignity and peace. It therefore falls to the world Organization to be the unequivocal guarantor of security and protection for those countries that lack the physical means to provide their own or that might simply be overrun by more powerful States.

Once again at this session the United Nations General Assembly will deliberate the agenda item on the protection and security of small States. My delegation hopes that important item will once again receive the same attention and support it was given at the forty-fourth and forty-sixth sessions.

My delegation draws inspiration from the unwavering and renewed resolve of the international community with regard to important security and political issues, which was significantly demonstrated in the Gulf crisis, among others. The inherent vulnerability of small States was never more clearly demonstrated than it was in the case of the international intervention in Kuwait in 1990. Who, indeed, could have imagined that a fully sovereign State Member of the United Nations, economically strong and with powerful friends, would find itself at risk of being wiped off the world political map - and if a country like Kuwait can be forced into such a precarious position, where is the security of far smaller and economically weaker States?

The recent instances in which the United Nations took firm and decisive action certainly highlight the importance and effectiveness of the collective-security system envisaged in the Charter. In addition, they brought home to the international community the fact that a rapid-response system needs to be constantly in place if international peace and security are to be maintained. The Security Council Summit Meeting in January 1992 reaffirmed that body's commitment to collective security as a valid principle in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation believes that this is the time to give urgent and deeper consideration to the overall question of collective security. This is easily said, but the subject includes the question of improving the skill and ability to exercise foresight and act with dispatch, as well as of building up the capacity and capability to move with greater coordination.

True success in accomplishing this challenging task facing the international community will require sincere commitment and dedication. This can be achieved only if every Member of the Organization exercises the political will to settle all disputes peacefully, without discrimination, and to assist the United Nations to move forward in that direction. The recommendations set forth in the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace", on preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building, can serve as an extremely effective tool to achieve this end.

My delegation sincerely feels that as we study together every possible means of strengthening the structure of the United Nations to make it more effective and responsive to a changing world the security of small States must be given its rightful place when priorities are reviewed and special consideration given the task of preserving international peace, security and stability.

One of the most encouraging events in world history has been the classic manner in which the Republic of South Africa, under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, has not only eliminated the policy of apartheid, that most inhuman form of racial discrimination, but also established democracy with full respect for all the norms of national reconciliation. It is therefore with sincere sentiments of congratulation and good wishes that my delegation welcomes the restoration of the Republic of South Africa to its rightful place in the family of nations and this Organization.

I view the positive developments in the Middle East as a most valuable lesson on how sincere, determined and dedicated efforts based on peace and conciliation can yield rich dividends in dangerously volatile situations.

I sincerely feel that the international community owes a debt of gratitude to the Governments of the United States of America and other States concerned for their most valuable contributions to the creation of the necessary atmosphere for the ongoing peace negotiations in the Middle East, in which I fervently hope and pray the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine will be restored. I am convinced that the present trend of events, if pursued with patience and in good faith by all

the parties involved, will result in the establishment of a sovereign, independent State of Palestine, the settlement of the issues related to the occupied Territories and finally the attainment by that region of a comprehensive and lasting peace based on the principles of justice and equality.

Time and again Maldives has stressed the importance of continuing accelerated efforts to attain the United Nations goal of completing the disarmament process. My delegation firmly believes that success in preserving and maintaining international peace, security and stability will depend on progress in the field of disarmament. Admittedly, there have been significant achievements in this area. However, the production, stockpiling and sale of weapons of war continue on an alarming scale throughout the world.

Although there is a convergence of views regarding the dangers of nuclear arms, some countries seem to desire to acquire or retain nuclear-weapons technology. We believe that so long as this trend continues unabated it will indeed be difficult to improve the climate of security and to pave the way for a safer world for generations to come.

One of the key disarmament issues confronting the international community is the question of a decision on extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We remain convinced that its unconditional and indefinite extension should be one of the cornerstones for building a world free of all nuclear weapons. But this requires that all the countries possessing nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapons technology take a responsible stand, something that can come about only through a sincere desire to establish a genuine international non-nuclear regime. In our opinion, the apparent reluctance of some countries to comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system is not encouraging. We therefore urge all those countries to join the international community in the persistent effort to establish a safer world.

My delegation also supports the concept of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace throughout the world. We feel that the failure to promote this concept in all regions of the world is a clear indication of the doubt and suspicion that still prevail in the international community. Unless we can overcome these uncertainties the chances of achieving global disarmament will indeed be bleak.

As we begin yet another session of discussions, consultations and debates on ways and means of uniting our efforts and resources to make the world a safer place for mankind and to alleviate the terrible human suffering in many countries, we should, I firmly believe, pause to assess the tremendous responsibility we carry. As representatives of individual countries, we have to consider our national interests; united, we have an unshakable commitment to giving undaunted and unwavering support to the process of making the United Nations as effective as is humanly possible, to prevent the evolution of such tragic, dangerous and explosive situations as those in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The question of Bosnia and Herzegovina has yet to be resolved. We condemn the continuing violence and genocide there, and call upon the international community to take more decisive steps to implement the Security Council's resolutions in order to discharge fully the responsibilities entrusted to us by the Charter and restore the sovereignty and independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Let us not tolerate in our time any act of genocide based on ethnic hatred or prejudice.

Similarly, my delegation is deeply concerned about the tragic situations continuing in Angola, Somalia and Rwanda despite the fact that the United Nations is still providing humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of their peoples. While commending the efforts of the international community to help these countries, which are being torn apart by civil strife, we feel that the assistance should not be limited to meeting humanitarian needs, but should extend beyond that to restoring peace and stability in those countries, giving them another chance to rebuild their national economies.

As I observe the world economic situation I cannot but feel considerable dismay at the fact that, despite the recent conclusion of the seven-year Uruguay Round of negotiations, the developing countries have not been provided with much impetus to maintain economic growth in the face of the increasing gap between themselves and the developed countries and of persistent protectionism in trade.

The situation adversely affects the least-developed countries most as they lack the resources to overcome the odds stacked against them. I feel that further intensification of South-South cooperation has become more necessary, in order to harness their resources for purposes of assisting the less developed of the developing countries and encouraging developmental efforts on the basis of collective self-reliance. The United Nations and

the international developmental and financial institutions should encourage and support this process.

At the same time, the North-South dialogue must not be allowed to be marginalized, since it is essential for the growth of a world economy on a firm foundation of partnership to promote common interests and benefits. Without this basic element, the chances of promoting a stable world economy indeed seem bleak.

After decades of protracted studies, research, discussions and debates, and then the resulting experience, we are today in a position to appreciate fully that development is not simple. It can be achieved only through a process that encompasses numerous attributes of human life; education, health, the environment, peace, the economy, society and culture and national and international behaviour all contribute to its achievement.

The reviews and expert opinions gathered on the Agenda for Development, together with the recent sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development, indicate that intergovernmental cooperation involving the various agencies of the United Nations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations must contribute to laying the groundwork for development. I do not foresee any easy or quick means of achieving development goals. While further detailed consideration is given to this multifaceted, all-important question, I should like to add my voice on the need to bear in mind the great diversity in the levels of progress that Member countries have been able to achieve, and the wide variation in the extent of resources that they can invest in this venture, which is an inherent right of every nation.

As the representative of a small island State, I pay tribute to all those responsible for the planning and organization of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was held in Barbados this year. I believe that appropriate recognition has now been given to the special environmental and economic circumstances of small island States in the context of achieving sustainable development. One of the most important outcomes of this Conference was a re-emphasis on the dire need of small island developing States for the development of human resources. But assessment of the need is only a prelude to the implementation of any programme of action. What is required is sustained effort by the developing States and technical and other input by the developed countries and international organizations. In view of the Programme of Action and Declaration emanating from the Barbados Conference, as well as Agenda 21, I need hardly emphasize the urgent need to stimulate positive responses by the international community with regard to assisting the island developing States to improve the socio-economic standards of their peoples in order to embark on plans for sustainable development.

At the same time, we are concerned at the speed at which international conferences are being held and ambitious programmes of action being drawn up without sufficient resources to implement them. I make this statement because of the experience we have had following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992. The expectations which followed that conference have started to recede because of insufficient resources available to implement the programme of action. One of the most outstanding results of the Conference was the creation of greater awareness of the environmental problems that the international community faces. At the same time, it is tragic to note that greater awareness of the predicament on the part of those countries most susceptible to environmental damage only helps to increase apprehensions of disaster and frustration.

As an island developing country, Maldives appreciates the tremendous achievement of the international community in establishing the rule of law on the vast stretches of the high seas, which cover two thirds of the surface of the Earth. The fact that it took 12 long years after its adoption for the Convention on the Law of the Sea to enter into force is indeed a development that will be written in letters of gold in the annals of world history.

The question of human rights should occupy a central place in our minds when we deal with all issues of global concern. The establishment of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is certainly a most welcome step. But this step can have meaningful results only if the necessary resources are provided for the High Commissioner to carry out his mandate fairly and objectively, without any further financial burdens on the membership of this Organization.

I would also like to emphasize here that, while the Universal Declaration of 1948 may be the universal guide for future work in this area, we must not attempt to lay down rigidly uniform standards of human conduct and behaviour for all societies without due respect for and regard to the diverse cultures and religions prevailing in

the world. For it is the full understanding of this diversity that reinforces the fabric of what we call international relations and the unity of the membership of this Organization.

The United Nations is being burdened with more and more onerous responsibilities not only for the preservation and maintenance of international peace, security and stability, but for also assisting mankind in the realization of the goals of a safer world and a higher standard of living for the generations to come.

I remain convinced that if this universal Organization is to be successful in meeting the numerous challenges before it, every one of its Members must extend unstinting financial, technological, military and manpower-resource support to the Organization.

We cannot afford to be complacent, nor can we condone any attempts to deflect the work of the United Nations to any path other than that of right, justice and equality, as enshrined in the Charter.

For my part, I can only reiterate the sincere commitment of the Government of the Republic of Maldives to supporting the United Nations and the principles of the Charter to the best of our ability. Only by so doing is there any hope of avoiding disastrous consequences. What is more, the Government of the Republic of Maldives implicitly trusts the United Nations as the guarantor of its security and as its protector.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): May I congratulate Foreign Minister Essy of Côte d'Ivoire on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. I am confident that he will steer our work to a successful conclusion, and I pledge him the full support of my delegation.

I wish also to take this opportunity to express my Government's satisfaction that South Africa, which now takes its place as a full and respected member of the community of nations, has been reinstated in the General Assembly.

It is a much-vaunted truth that the end of the cold war has released the United Nations from the bondage of a world obsessed with military security. But there is another change at work - perhaps less abrupt but equally epoch-making - in the international system which has far-reaching implications for our world Organization. I refer to the progressive intertwining of the destinies of the different peoples of the world, the globalization of the world economy, the communications revolution and the increasingly transnational nature of the issues of human survival, be they environmental problems, poverty, refugees or population pressures, and the eroding capacity of the nation-State to address them single-handedly.

Global interdependence is causing greater demands to be made on the United Nations than at any previous time. The will to cooperate is gradually replacing the spirit of confrontation throughout the world. At the same time, it is not clear that we have created an organization equal to the task of meeting the host of new demands. Though adept at analysing their sources, we are still inclined to deal with conflicts only after they arise instead of preventing them. The dangers we face may be novel, but the structures we draw on to cope with them derive from a world that has largely vanished from view. Last but not least, we saddle the United Nations with new responsibilities without providing adequate resources to tackle them. In this way, a discrepancy has come about between our expectations of the United Nations and the ability to deliver on them.

While our main challenge should be to seek to transform the United Nations into a more effective instrument for dealing with issues that truly are beyond the compass of the nation-State, we should also bear in mind that the United Nations was not designed to be a substitute for national Governments. Wherever possible the United Nations should work with its Member States in areas where they are competent and draw to the maximum extent possible on regional organizations. In so doing, we reduce the burden on the United Nations and facilitate the setting of priorities.

Looked at in this perspective, a number of developments over the past 12 months give the United Nations reason for encouragement. Democracy and the principles of the free market are making new inroads, and the protection of human rights is gaining momentum in many parts of the world. In Eastern Europe the process of democratic change is now irreversible. The negotiated withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic States has removed from the European continent one of the last vestiges of the cold war. In Northern Ireland there is for the first time since early this century a realistic chance of lasting peace and stability. In the Middle East the breakthrough achieved last year has been consolidated with the Gaza-Jericho Agreement and a peace accord between Israel and Jordan, hopefully paving

the way for a comprehensive peace settlement in the entire region.

In South Africa, the spirit of dialogue has finally triumphed over the forces of hatred and racism, offering a model of tolerance for other countries on the troubled African continent. In Western Sahara, there are brightening prospects, provided that all the relevant parties do their part in creating the necessary climate of confidence to enable the people of Western Sahara to decide their own destiny in a democratic election.

But there have also been setbacks. Gross violations of human rights have continued in places as far apart as Haiti and East Timor. The tragic injustice in the former Yugoslavia, the chaos in Somalia, as well as the terrible carnage inflicted on the people of Rwanda by their own compatriots, demonstrate the intractable nature of many of the conflicts that our Organization is being called upon to deal with. Unlike the inter-State conflicts which traditionally have preoccupied the United Nations, these are conflicts taking place within the confines of the nation-State, where legitimate authority has either collapsed or been emaciated by civil strife. As the Organization adapts itself to the new demands of the post-cold-war era, ways must be found to address such internal crises in full conformity with the United Nations Charter.

To heed this call, greater attention must now be concentrated on the preventive dimension. Much effort has in recent years been devoted to peace-keeping, which now extends to non-military operations, including electoral assistance, the provision of humanitarian relief and human rights monitoring. This is as it should be, and countries contributing substantially to such peace-keeping operations certainly deserve both our gratitude and respect. At the same time, we must make sure that the necessary resources are also allocated to development.

One of the lessons we have learned in recent years is that we must focus more intently on the link between peace and development. Increasingly, we have come to understand that peace and security require solutions to social and economic problems, that without development there can be no peace. In this connection, I wish to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose agenda for development, submitted two years after his pathbreaking Agenda for Peace, has sharpened our awareness of the need for creating an infrastructure of peace.

For there to be a stable and lasting infrastructure of peace, a number of elements must be in place: a commitment to democracy and respect for human rights, a sound social fabric, a growing economy and a sustainable natural environment.

As a representative of one of the world's oldest democracies — one which celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its second republic this year — I cannot be accused of underrating the redeeming virtues of democracy, which, as was pointed out earlier in this debate, fosters the greatest force behind social and economic progress: individual creativity. Democracies, as a rule, also tend to honour human rights. By promoting tolerance and respect for the dignity of the individual, we contribute to preventing cultural, ethnic and territorial conflicts. For good reason, human rights are therefore increasingly being considered as an integral part of the notion of extended security. It is thus to be regretted that the efforts of the United Nations in this important field continue to be strained due to lack of financial resources.

The effective implementation and monitoring of human rights standards, not least with respect to vulnerable groups, should be a matter of priority for the United Nations. The plight of children in some parts of the world gives cause for grave concern. Four years ago, the largest gathering of world political leaders assembled here in this Hall of the General Assembly and endorsed the principle that children should have the first call on the resources of society essential to their survival, protection and development. Next year we will assess how far we have come in honouring the commitments undertaken by the Summit for Children. At the same time we will be celebrating the half-centenary of the United Nations. In the view of my Government, this milestone event should be used to give new impetus to efforts to ensure that children are given the best social conditions the world community can offer.

As it happens, the fiftieth anniversary celebrations will coincide with the Beijing Conference on the status of women. The timing is significant as the goals of achieving equality, empowerment and security for women are key to the social agenda of the United Nations as it makes the transition into its second half-century. Improving the status of women is of paramount importance for the well-being of the family, and has positive multiplier effects on overall levels of education health and population growth in society as a whole.

Conversely, where society has broken down or social safety-nets are inadequate, women assume the largest burden. There is therefore a direct link between the Fourth World Conference on Women, the recent International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo and the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen next spring. The Copenhagen summit will afford us a much needed opportunity to focus attention on the social ills that compromise the ability of nations to develop their full potential, be they poverty or disease, homelessness or hunger, joblessness or social exclusion, crime or violence. Fifty years after the United Nations avowed in its Charter to promote social progress and better standards of living in greater freedom, the time has come to put sustainable human development at the top of the Organization's agenda.

In relieving the plight of the most underprivileged segments of the world's population, the role of economic growth can hardly be overstated. The abolition of trade barriers is the single most important factor for world economic growth. Just as a rising tide lifts the boats, so an increase in world trade will create new jobs and raise incomes around the world. My Government therefore strongly welcomes the establishment of the World Trade Organization and urges other signatory States to ratify the Uruguay-Round Agreement without undue delay.

Focusing on economic progress must not, however, blind us to the need to keep an eye on other areas, which, if neglected, might strip us of the harvest of increased prosperity. One such area is the environment. Over the past few years the United Nations has made significant headway in its efforts to promote sustainable development worldwide. The results of the Rio Conference on Environment and development provide a sound basis for further work. As we now assume the momentous task of development, measures must also be taken to protect the environment from detrimental patterns of production and consumption.

While recognizing the need to take a balanced view of the ecosystem as a whole, Iceland remains particularly concerned over the deteriorating condition of the world's oceans. It is a hopeful sign that the international community has shown increasing awareness of the importance of the sustainable utilization of the living resources of the sea. It has been estimated that the poorest two-thirds of the world's population get about 40 percent of their protein from fish, and that food production must more than double just to keep pace with the growth in demand in the decades ahead. To meet this growth, it will be necessary to rely not only on agriculture but also - and to an increasing extent - on the sustainable utilization of the living resources of the sea.

Such considerations notwithstanding, the ecosystem of the sea is now in greater danger than ever before from pollution and overfishing. Protecting the oceans against the repercussions of economic and industrial expansion will pose a major challenge to the international community in the years ahead. Although much has been accomplished, existing conventions aimed at containing the pollution of the marine environment cover only a part of the problem, as no global scheme addressing pollution from land-based activities is in place. For this reason, Iceland attaches great importance to the Conference on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, to be convened in Washington next year under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme. We urge all States and relevant international agencies to participate actively in the preparatory process, commencing officially in Reykjavik in March next year.

The responsible use of fisheries resources is, however, no less important than combatting the threat of marine pollution. The universal acceptance of the sovereignty of the coastal State over its adjacent waters was a necessary precondition of the effective management by the world community of the living resources of the sea. The application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which extended the rule of law to over two thirds of the Earth's surface, has contributed more than any single undertaking to the furtherance of that goal. Against this background, Iceland particularly welcomes the fact that this Convention, a crowning achievement in the progressive development of international law under the auspices of the United Nations, will come into force in only a few weeks' time.

My country remains strongly committed to the establishment of an international regime governing all aspects of the utilization of living marine resources, including the high seas. For this reason, Iceland has actively supported the drafting of a legally binding and comprehensive instrument that would ensure the effective management and conservation of fisheries outside the economic zone of the coastal State. In Iceland's view, this goal could best be achieved by establishing regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements open to States with legitimate interests in the relevant fisheries. Such provisions should not, however, be understood as

implying approval of existing forms of cooperation based, in some instances, on unilateral decisions by a few States aimed at excluding other neighbouring States, notwithstanding the latter's overwhelming dependence on and proximity to the fisheries in question. Indeed, unjustified discrimination would defeat the very aim of establishing a new high seas fisheries regime for the benefit of all nations.

The global challenge of development calls for bold new thinking, backed by the solid commitment of the international community to the goals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It also demands that we try to establish consensus on the restructuring and reform of our Organization in the near future. Efforts must be made to improve the representational capacity and efficiency of the Security Council and at the same time preserve the constitutional balance between the various organs of the Organization, not least between the Council and the General Assembly.

We find ourselves on the threshold of a new era. Yet, we are far from having rid ourselves completely of the legacy of the cold war, which includes immense quantities of armaments and the technology for producing them. It would certainly be disastrous if the recent transformation of the international security environment were to be undermined by the growing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In this connection, my Government deems it of the utmost importance that the Convention on chemical weapons enter into force next year and that the Convention on Biological Weapons be further reinforced. In addition, the indefinite and unconditional extension of the non-proliferation Treaty would be the single most significant measure against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This should be followed up by universal adherence to the nuclear-test moratorium and the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

As we inaugurate the second half-century of the United Nations, what better gift could the community of nations bestow on itself? And in what better way could we make a clean break with the cold war era?

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): It is a special pleasure for me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. We are confident that under his able leadership the deliberations of this session will come to a fruitful conclusion. My delegation extends its full support to him in carrying out his important duties.

I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Samuel R. Insanally, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana to the United Nations, for successfully presiding over the General Assembly during its forty-eighth session. I also take this opportunity to express my admiration to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the dedication, commitment and insight with which he has been serving the United Nations.

Since the end of the cold war the world community has faced many developments, both encouraging and disturbing. As a Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid — now dissolved — Nepal feels particularly happy about the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa. As President Mandela said in his speech earlier in this session, it was one of the ironies of our age that it was only so late in the twentieth century that such a regime came to an end. The United Nations role in the establishment of a united democratic and non-racist South Africa has been gratifying to all of us. The end of apartheid represents progress on the part of mankind in its history of civilization. The statesmanship of President Mandela can be a source of inspiration for those who are in search of freedom, peace and justice elsewhere in the world.

Nepal also welcomes the progress in the Middle East peace process and looks forward to the establishment of comprehensive peace in the region. We hope that such achievements will inspire peoples in conflict with each other elsewhere to end their hostilities, and to start similar peace processes.

There are also disturbing areas of conflict. The Nepalese people are grieved at the enormous loss of life and the extensive material devastation in Rwanda. It is our hope that with the active support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in conflict resolution, the United Nations peace-keeping efforts will facilitate the process of restoring normalcy and a peaceful civil society in Rwanda.

Nepal also appreciates the role played by the OAU in Burundi in terms of conflict prevention, management and resolution. We hope that the OAU mechanism will be applied effectively to other troubled parts of the region

such as Somalia, Angola and Liberia, in order to restore normalcy.

Nepal is also deeply distressed by the tragedy which, despite the Security Council's resolutions, continues unabated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We would like to urge all the parties concerned to seek peace through dialogue and negotiation rather than through violence. Nepal also looks forward to an early restoration of the democratically elected Government in Haiti, which alone can ensure full respect for human rights in that country.

We are meeting on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which will be a time for us to reflect on the past five decades and plan for the next 50 years. Born as a result of the Second World War, the United Nations has over the past five decades ceaselessly deployed efforts to prevent a third world war. Disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, has therefore been one of its major concerns. The United Nations also made constant efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and to put an end to apartheid in South Africa, and it remained engaged in many other areas of conflict. However, the last five decades, characterized by the cold war, almost paralysed the United Nations.

The East-West divide seriously hampered the United Nations efforts in most conflict situations. A number of important agreements were reached and many peace negotiations were held outside the United Nations. Nevertheless, those achievements were in conformity with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and the United Nations provided an important global forum for discussion, which helped defuse major global catastrophes. Thus, in the ultimate analysis, the United Nations has undoubtedly made significant contributions to international relations. Moreover, the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other related bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and many others, have been engaged in improving social and economic conditions around the world.

Since the cold war, whose enormous cost adversely affected the lives of billions of people, is now over, we at the United Nations, standing — as it were — at the crossroads of history, can now define the Organization's role and work for the next 50 years.

With such rapid changes taking place in international relations, particularly in recent years, the United Nations needs to be restructured and revitalized. The restructuring of the Security Council has assumed a particular urgency. Nepal strongly supports an increase in the membership of the Council to reflect, not only the increase in the general membership of the United Nations, but also the reality of the present world. A review of the Council's membership has also to take into account the contributions of Member States to the maintenance of international peace and security. We attach a high priority to greater transparency and openness in the Council's work, and also attach great importance to the principle of equitable representation, which would give all United Nations Members — large or small, rich or poor, powerful or weak — a reasonable opportunity to contribute to the work of the Council.

We hope that the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Security Council and related issues will be fruitful in due time. Our delegation considers that the reform and expansion of the Security Council should also include measures geared to reforming its working methods and procedures. In addition, there is a need to enhance the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The changed context of international relations and the United Nations preoccupation with peace-keeping operations should not be allowed to deflect attention from efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Rather, the propitious climate now prevailing calls for strengthening the role of the United Nations in arms control and disarmament. In this context, I wish to recall the unanimous political support expressed by the General Assembly at its last session for the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to give to its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban a mandate to negotiate such a ban. To this end, the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Nepal is a founding member, has called for a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament in order to undertake a comprehensive assessment of progress towards global disarmament.

Like the rest of the international community, Nepal looks forward to the early conclusion of a comprehensive treaty prohibiting nuclear tests in all atmospheres. A non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable test-ban treaty would have a positive impact on the success of the Conference on the review and extension of the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is due to be held in 1995.

In addition to pursuing confidence-building measures, the United Nations role in arms control and disarmament needs to be effectively strengthened. In this context, the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament can play an important role, as they provide much-needed forums for the exchange of views. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has already held several meetings to promote such a process of dialogue and interaction.

Nepal is firm in its conviction that peace-keeping operations, though extremely important, especially in this post-cold-war period, are no substitute for the peaceful resolution of conflicts through political dialogue and mediation. Application of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security should be invoked by the Security Council only as a last resort, fully respecting the principles of impartiality and non-selectivity. Nepal has supported fully the Secretary-General's initiative in expanding preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. We have consistently committed our troops to the peace-keeping operations undertaken by the United Nations through the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Protection Force.

Besides serving in Cambodia during the critical stage of democratic elections there, Nepal has also sent civilian police monitors for electoral assistance in Mozambique. Nepal has also sent troops to Somalia, despite the heavy loss of life and casualties suffered by our young men. We would like to pay tribute to those Nepalese soldiers and to the others who gave their lives in the relentless pursuit of international peace and security. Prime Minister Giri ja Prasad Koirala, in a recent statement to the roundtable on United Nations peace-keeping operations in Kathmandu, stated:

> "While the Government (of Nepal) has raised its voice at the United Nations and in appropriate international forums for more effective mechanisms for the safety and protection of our personnel, the Government reaffirms its commitment to continue to participate in such operations with a sense of responsibility and solemn obligation."

Since peace-keeping operations have become more complicated and more expensive in recent years, there is greater urgency to make those operations cost-effective and efficient. Peace-keeping contributions must be paid in full and on time so that the troop — contributing countries may be in a better position to maintain the most critical element in peace-keeping operations — the troops. My Government holds the firm view that the death and disability compensation to all troops should he based on equity. We hope to review the current guidelines on this matter in order to arrive at a standard compensation package applicable to all.

Every peace-keeping operation should be devised with a clear mandate, a realistic time frame and a correct assessment of the situation. Furthermore, we would like to reiterate that timely consultations with troop-contributing countries are essential elements for the enhancement of the peace-keeping capability of the United Nations. Nepal welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative on stand-by arrangements for peace-keeping. We are studying the proposal seriously, especially in view of current events that highlight the need for the establishment of such an arrangement.

Since the threat to security lies, *inter alia*, in non-military sources such as the lack of economic and social development, Nepal stresses the need for timely implementation of Agenda 21 for ensuring the sustainability of the planet for present and future generations. The Commission on Sustainable Development has made a good start. It must not be allowed to falter or to be turned into a discussion forum only. The Commission should build a bridge between the North and the South to enable the developing countries to follow the path of sustainable development. By providing additional financial resources and transferring environmentally sound technology to developing countries, the international community can surely reach the goals set in Agenda 21. In our view, the level of consumption and wastage in most industrialized countries also needs to be moderated if we are to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

The success of population and socio-economic development programmes hinges on the full empowerment of women. The focus given to the empowerment of women in decision-making, especially in planning the size of a family, at the recent International Conference on Population and Development is a mater of satisfaction to my delegation. However, the success of the Plan of Action as adopted requires increased financial resources. The developing countries, despite their severe resource constraints, have been

committing significant amounts in population activities at the cost of other important areas that are required for economic growth and development.

That important conference will be followed by the World Summit for Social Development, the fourth World Conference on Women and the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). This year alone, we have participated in many important conferences: on natural disaster reduction, on the sustainable development of small island States, on combating desertification and drought, and on population and development. A question remains outstanding: that of the availability of the critical resources for the successful implementation of the recommendations of these conferences. The developing countries find themselves in an exasperating situation, trying to cope with their responsibilities, as outlined in previous agreements and resolutions, without the necessary actions from the industrialized countries.

Nepal fully shares the Secretary-General's view that an alternative to the United Nations in the field of development simply does not exist, especially in the light of the new vision of development as inextricably linked with peace and security. We reiterate our view that there must be close cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The main objectives of the proposed agenda for development should be directed towards ensuring successful implementation of existing programmes for the alleviation of poverty. The agenda should be an instrument that looks after the most vulnerable and the weakest nations of the world.

The conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the signing of the agreements at Marrakesh undoubtedly constitute a historic breakthrough in the international trade regime. The window of opportunity is now open for many developing countries to enhance their trade and development. Once again, the least developed countries will be left out, in spite of this tremendous opportunity now available to many. The lack of basic physical infrastructure and the absence of a manufacturing base will prevent the least developed countries from taking advantage of this new opportunity. The least developed countries, including my own country, have suffered for decades. These handicaps, however, have not deterred us from our determination to cooperate fully with the international community by instituting structural adjustment programmes and economic liberalization policies, including privatization

Structural adjustment programmes lacking due consideration for social safety nets have pushed a large sector of the world's population towards more misery and discontent. Economic liberalization programmes without adequate institutional and organizational set-ups have not yielded the desired results in many countries. The major purpose of the privatization programmes undertaken by many developing countries — the efficient and productive use of resources — has yet to be fulfilled. At the same time, it may be appreciated that these inadequate measures, resulting in higher inflation, a distorted market system and increasing unemployment, may result in greater social tension.

We are happy to note that in the context of the follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action, an open-ended Working Group of the Third Committee has been established; we hope it will review the mandates of existing human rights machinery, taking into account the balanced emphasis between civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights, as well as improving human rights on the basis of the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity.

Violation or suppression of human rights within a nation's boundary have consequences outside its boundaries as well. People unable to live in conditions where human rights are suppressed are forced to flee their own homelands and take refuge elsewhere. United Nations agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, and international and non-governmental humanitarian organizations, are well aware of this. My delegation would like to commend the work of these United Nations agencies. We also feel that the agencies must be mandated to serve all the people in such difficult situations.

The Constitution of Nepal enshrines the principle of universal human rights. We believe that the right to development is an integral part of human rights. Nepal is now party to 14 international human rights instruments, including all the major Conventions and Covenants. A national action plan on human rights is being prepared in line with the final document of the Vienna Conference on Human Rights.

Nepal is also consolidating the multi-party democratic system that was restored by the people through a popular movement in 1990. Nepal participated actively in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, at Managua, Nicaragua, in

July this year. The Conference provided us with an opportunity to share each other's experience of nascent democracy. In November this year the peopie of Nepal are participating in our second general elections on the basis of adult franchise. We are confident that this exercise in democracy will give an impetus to the long-term economic development of our country.

The Charter of the United Nations captures the highest ideals of mankind. However, much remains to be done to put those ideals into practice. We look forward to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations as the occasion to work for instituting dynamism and efficiency in the United Nations. My delegation is fully confident that our vision of the United Nations as a symbol of peace, security, human rights and development will be realized if Member States demonstrate the political will and provide the necessary financial and material support to the Organization.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.